

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, April 4, 2003

MPDC BEGINS USE OF "ANTI-LOITERING/ DRUG FREE ZONE" LAW

In a new push to reduce drug crime in DC neighborhoods, the MPDC has begun using an anti-loitering law that allows police to disperse groups of two or more individuals congregating for the purpose of illegal drug activity within a designated "drug free zone." The Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone Act of 1996 provides that, while a drug free zone is in effect, it is unlawful for a group of two or more persons to congregate in a public space for the purpose of selling, purchasing or using illegal drugs. Persons in violation of the law first will be warned by a police officer that they are to disperse and depart the area, or face arrest without a second warning. Violators are subject to a fine of up to \$300, imprisonment for up to 180 days, or both. The law allows the Chief of Police to declare a specific area as a drug free zone for up to 120 hours, based on factors such as a disproportionately high number of drug arrests within the past six months or any drug-related homicides within the area. Chief Ramsey has declared the first two drug free zones for purposes of the law. One zone, in Police Service Areas 312 and 314, runs from P Street to Hanover Place, NW, from North Capitol Street to First Street, NW; it is in effect from 3 pm on April 3, until 3 pm on April 7. The other zone, in PSAs 601, 602 and 603, is in the general area of Division Avenue, NE, from Nannie Helen Burroughs Avenue to Eads Street; it is in effect from 12:01 am on April 3 until 12 midnight on April 7.

① The MPDC anticipates designating up to two drug free zones a week for the immediate future. Read the news release on the designation of the first two drug free zones at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2014>

① For complete details about the Anti-Loitering/Drug Free Zone law, including the criteria for designating a drug free zone and authorized enforcement activities, visit:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/comm/drugfreezone.shtm>

CHIEF RAMSEY OUTLINES FY04 BUDGET PRIORITIES

In testimony this past week before the DC Council's Committee on the Judiciary, Chief Ramsey outlined the priorities contained in the MPDC's proposed budget for fiscal year 2004, which begins October 1, 2003. The Department's proposed operating budget for FY04 is approximately \$379 million from all funding sources. Close to 81 percent of the budget is for "Personal Services" to cover salaries, fringe benefits and other costs associated of sworn and civilian employees. The remaining 19 percent covers a variety of "Nonpersonal Services" to include supplies, utilities, telecommunications, rent and the like. The Chief said the proposed budget would allow the Department to cover commitments to its current employees – including negotiated pay increases with union members and required overtime costs – while also permitting the MPDC to hire up to its authorized level of 3,800 sworn officers. The MPDC currently has approximately 3,625 officers. The Chief testified that the Department has been unable to hire more officers during the current fiscal year because money originally intended for new hires had to be reprogrammed to cover union pay increases and overtime costs, which were not adequately funded in the FY03 baseline budget. The Chief also reported that the FY04 budget proposal would allow the Department to fill 37 civilian vacancies, including 16 operators in the Public Safety Communications Center. He said the Department is hiring 21 more civilian call-takers this fiscal year using funds from the E-9-1-1 fees collected from DC phone customers.

① Read the Chief's complete statement at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/stmts/2003/03/033103.shtm>

① The MPDC also testified about its proposed capital budget for FY04, which includes funds for continued upgrades to facilities and the Department's vehicle fleet. Included in the capital budget proposal for FY04 is \$4 million for land acquisition and design for a facility elsewhere in the city to replace the current Special Operations Division building at 2301 L Street, NW.

MPDC TO PARTICIPATE IN COMPLIANCE CHECKS TARGETING ALCOHOL SALES TO MINORS

Again this year, the MPDC is teaming up with the DC Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration (ABRA) and the National Capital Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking (NCCPUD) to help reduce the sale of alcoholic beverages to minors in DC. During a recent training session, police officers, ABRA investigators and 12 youth advocates from NCCPUD were instructed in how to conduct compliance checks of licensed establishments that serve or sell alcoholic beverages in the District. Under the program, the youth advocates, who are 16-18 years of age, attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages. Under law, establishments that sell to underage buyers can be cited, arrested and fined. During the recent training sessions, teams of officers, investigators and youth advocates canvassed the city and conducted mock compliance checks. The results were mixed, with several establishments failing to ask the youth for identification and some completing the sale even after checking IDs that clearly showed the buyer to be a minor. There were a few establishments that did not sell to the youth advocates, and they were acknowledged for doing a good job. Actual compliance checks will start later this year.

NEW PLACARDS IDENTIFY PSA CRUISERS

You may have noticed that marked MPDC police cruisers are now sporting numbered placards on top of their emergency light bars. But just what do those numbers mean? The four digits actually identify the Police Service Area (or PSA) in which that cruiser is operating. The first three digits represent the PSA number; the fourth digit designates the car within the PSA. For example, a placard labeled "7011" means the first car for PSA 701; "7012" means the second car operating in PSA 701 during that tour of duty. Placards ending in "0" indicate a vehicle being operated by a supervisor within that PSA. In the past, PSAs (or police beats) were designated with permanent decals on the rear bumper of the vehicles. But this system was somewhat inflexible if, for example, a PSA vehicle had to be taken out of service for maintenance. Under the new system, the PSA placards can be easily removed and placed on different vehicles, depending upon the assignment for that tour. The intent of the new system is to make it easier for residents to identify the PSA officers in their communities.

NEWS & NOTES

Large Protests Expected Next Weekend. With the International Monetary Fund and World Group scheduled to meet April 12-13 in DC, and with anti-war activities continuing, the MPDC is preparing for large-scale protests covering both issues next weekend. All sworn members will be activated on extended shifts, with days off canceled, so that the Department can both manage expected protests and maintain neighborhood patrols.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The MPDC is joining other law enforcement agencies and victim service organizations in observing National Crime Victims' Rights Week, which runs from April 6-12. Information about victim assistance in DC, as well as useful links, can be found at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/serv/victims/victims.shtm>

National Work Zone Awareness Week. With more than 1,000 people a year dying in work zone crashes, transportation and law enforcement officials are teaming up to encourage motorists to stay alert and slow down in work zones. National Work Zone Awareness Week runs from April 6-12. Details at http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/fourthlevel/pro_res_wzs_nwzaw.htm

① The program is funded in part by a grant from the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Read the news release at:
<http://www.mpdc.org/blue/news.asp?sid=2019>

① Learn more about DC laws on underage drinking and driving by visiting:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/traffic/duihome.shtm>

① Don't know what police district or PSA you live in? Find out by using the PSA Finder feature on the MPDC website at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtm>

① In an attempt to enhance visibility, MPDC cruisers continue to operate at all times with small flashing lights on their light bars. Officers are not attempting to pull over motorists when these lights are activated. A traffic stop or emergency situation is indicated by full activation of emergency lights and, at times, the siren.

DATA BOX

Homicides (as of 4/4/03)

- 2003: 58
- 2002: 56
- % Change: +3.6%

Arrests (week ending 3/29/03)

- Total: 727
- Drugs: 60
- Motor Vehicle Theft: 24

Firearm Recoveries (as of 4/1/03)

- Total: 481
- March: 158

Traffic Fatalities (as of 4/4/03)

- 2003: 9
- 2002: 17
- % Change: -47.1%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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